

The Effects of Self-Presentation Goals While Using Social Networking Sites
On Contingencies of Self-Worth

Research Thesis

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Abstract

People's social image is an important part of their feelings of self-worth (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). The rise in social networking sites allows for people to become even more social, yet allows them a great amount of control over their social image. The present research investigated whether the social and self-presentational nature of social networking sites can change its users' contingencies of self-worth (Crocker & Wolfe, 2001). It was hypothesized that social networking use leads to an increased concern with others' perception and a greater dependence on external contingencies of self-worth (appearance, approval of others, and competition). Forty-four participants used a social networking site designed to mimic Facebook for one week. Participants' goals for the social networking site were manipulated and change in their external contingencies of self-worth and concern with perception on Facebook was measured. Although no significant changes in external contingencies of self-worth were found, participants with an impression goal became more concerned with their perception on Facebook compared to participants with an expression goal. This provides preliminary evidence that striving to impress others through social networks can lead to an increased concern with others' perceptions and possibly an increased value placed on validation from others.

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Humans are inherently social. We rarely act in isolation. Consequently, our social self-image is critical to how we think and feel about ourselves (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Some would argue that our social self-image is the foundation of our feelings of self-worth. Sociometer theory suggests that people use feedback from others and current social standing as cues to assess their own value (Leary & Baumeister, 2000). Relationships with others are an integral part of one's life and consequently, how we are perceived by others impacts our feelings of self-worth. Research has shown that negative feedback and social rejection leads to declines in self-esteem, while positive feedback and social acceptance lead to slight increases in self-esteem (Leary, Haupt, Strausser, & Chokel, 1998). To avoid the negative emotions associated with negative feedback, people often engage in impression management and self-presentation to avoid rejection altogether (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). The motivation for self-presentation comes from people's concern with how they are perceived by others and the desire to make a positive impression.

Contingencies of Self-Worth

Although everyone has a desire to feel good about themselves, people differ in the domains that are most crucial to determining their feelings of self-worth. These different areas are called contingencies of self-worth (CSW) (Crocker & Wolfe, 2001). Contingencies of self-worth are areas that one's sense of value as a person depends on. Successes or failures in areas in which one is contingent are especially impactful on one's self-worth.

Crocker and Wolfe (2001) identified 7 major contingencies of self-worth: appearance, the approval of others, competition, accomplishments, family support, living by a moral code, and God's love. These seven domains can be placed into two categories: areas that are intrinsic, which rely on internal aspects of the self and external areas, which rely on extrinsic aspects of

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the environment, and often other people. For internal areas, goal maintenance, goal success, and ultimately, one's feelings of self-worth, are dependent on the individual. External areas, however, often rely on others' perceptions of the self. Appearance, approval of others, and competition are considered the most external domains in which people can stake their self-esteem (Crocker & Wolfe, 2001).

Positive psychological well-being is associated with self-worth that is staked in internal, rather than external, domains (Crocker et al, 2003). Studies suggest that people function better if their self-esteem is derived from core, unique features of the self compared to external features of the self or unstable characteristics of the environment (Kernis, 2003; Pyszczynski, Greenberg and Goldenberg, 2003). The instability of external areas leads to increased fluctuations in one's self-esteem, which is associated with negative consequences in various areas of one's life, including underdeveloped self-concept, lower levels of intrinsic motivation, and increased hostile reactions to threatening events (Kernis et al, 1993).

Contingencies of self-worth remain relatively stable over time (Crocker, Sommers & Luhtanen, 2002). However, there is some evidence that one's contingencies of self-worth can change based on the environment or specific situations. This is because the standards in the environment can be internalized and adopted as one's own standards (Crocker & Wolfe, 2001). People can use the values of the people around them as cues to what is important for evaluating self-worth.

Facebook as an Influential Environment

Social networking sites have become increasingly important in the lives of adolescents and young adults. A survey of Midwest universities found that 91% of college students have a Facebook account (Wiley & Sisson, 2006) and college students spend an average of 10 to 30

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minutes on Facebook every day (Ellison, Steinfield & Lampe, 2007). Because of the prevalence of social networking sites, adolescents and young adults are increasingly aware of others' values through access to friends' posts and profile information.

Facebook users spend a majority of their time on Facebook looking at others' profiles, wall posts, and photos (Pempek et al, 2009). Because this information is so readily available, it is possible that others' values as expressed on Facebook can be adopted as the standards by which users judge themselves. In fact, a study of the relationship between adolescents' friends' profile information and subsequent attitudes found that adolescents whose Facebook friends portrayed a favorable attitude towards alcohol use reported a greater willingness to use alcohol and exhibited more positive attitudes toward alcohol use (Litt & Stock, 2011). This suggests the values displayed on others' profile pages can influence their friends' attitudes.

The present research concerns the role of self-presentation on social networking sites such as Facebook. Social networking sites are designed for social interaction and are structured in a way that encourages positive self-presentation. Facebook users' profile pages have a dedicated space to describe themselves to others. They can upload pictures and update their statuses for the world to see. Members can provide feedback to other users' activities as easily as clicking a 'like' button on pictures, statuses, and comments. A majority of the content on Facebook is positive in nature (Gonzales & Hancock, 2011). Perhaps this is because it is easy to downplay one's negative qualities or refuse to share negative events with the social network. One can either fail to post anything negative at all, spin negative events into positive ones or even lie. An in-depth analysis of Facebook use that revealed that the majority of users "untag" (take their name off a photo that they happen to be in) photos because they do not like the way they look, suggesting that Facebook users care about the way they are being perceived by others

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and consequently, are prone to protect their positive self-image (Pempek et al, 2009).

Consequently, the environment on Facebook presents a positively biased view of one's social environment. Some research suggests that Facebook can even lead to depression because the others' overly positive presentation of themselves leads others to believe they are not doing as well in comparison, which can cause severe declines in self-esteem (Chou & Edge, 2012).

Facebook users can socialize with friends (and even strangers), but it is also a place where their personality, appearance and accomplishments are available to be judged. People post things for their friends, family, and acquaintances to see, to enjoy, and essentially, to comment on. Feedback plays an integral role in social networking use. To illustrate this further, consider why people would update their Facebook at all, rather than simply keeping a private diary? Regardless of whether receiving feedback from others is the primary reason people use social networking sites, research suggests that people care about how others perceive them on Facebook. One study found that posting pictures on Facebook is positively correlated with an appearance contingency of self-worth, indicating that people who frequently post pictures to Facebook are more likely to stake their self-esteem in their appearance (Stefanone et al., 2011). It is possible that these members use picture posts as a way to seek validation from others, throughout positive feedback, on their appearance. Research also indicates that validation from others on social networking sites does, in fact, impact the self-esteem of its users. Positive reactions to profiles on social networking sites lead to increases in self-esteem, while negative feedback lead to declines in self-esteem (Valkenburg et al., 2006).

These studies highlight the role that validation from others plays on Facebook. They demonstrate that Facebook users are typically concerned with how they appear to others and that others' feedback influences their feelings of self-worth. Because of the structure of Facebook, the

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values salient to Facebook users are likely to be associated with external contingencies of self-worth, such as appearance, approval from others, and competition. The external contingencies would be the most susceptible to change because they rely on validation of others.

Goals for Facebook Use

Facebook is unique because it allows users a great amount of control over their self-presentation. Therefore, users can take advantage of this control to create an exaggerated positive image rather than a completely accurate or authentic one. We propose two different goals for Facebook use (but recognize that more goals are possible). The goal to make a good impression on others should contribute to an increased emphasis on others' approval for feelings of self-worth. As a result, a person with impression goals likely relies on external areas of his life to inform his self-worth, making the influence of the extrinsic environment that much stronger. A self-expression goal, on the other hand, may buffer Facebook users from an overreliance on others' approval. Being true to oneself is less exhausting and less stressful (Schlenker & Leary, 1982). One does not have to constantly maintain an overly positive self-image by simultaneously promoting their desirable qualities and covering up their negative ones. Authenticity alleviates the burden of making a positive impression on many different people, each with his own preferences. We propose authenticity, or honest expression of the self, would attenuate a reliance on positive feedback from others for feelings of self-worth. Having an expression goal allows each person to focus on what is really important to feelings of self-worth, which to most is the internal areas of their lives, not the external ones. Impression goals can lead to anxiety over whether one is successful at pleasing others (Schlenker & Leary, 1982).

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Present Study

The aim of the present study was to examine the effect of Facebook, an environment likely to produce a strong reliance on others' approval, on its users' external contingencies of self-worth and concern with others' perceptions of the self. Participants were active in a social networking site designed to mimic Facebook for one week. Contingencies of self-worth and general concern with perception on their actual Facebook were measured at pre-test and post-test. Participants' goals for the social networking site were manipulated. Some were given an expression goal and others were given an impression goal for the site. It was hypothesized that increase in external contingencies would be greater for participants who had the goal of making a good impression on others, rather than the goal of just being oneself.

A second manipulation exposed participants to either a social or nonsocial environment. It was hypothesized that participants who created profile pages that confederates will see and provide feedback (in the social environment) would experience an increase in the amount of importance they place on external contingencies of self worth (appearance, competition, and approval of others) compared to participants who create profile pages that no one will see. Though, participants in the non-social condition were instructed to act as if others would see their profile. Without the presence of other people, social networking sites are no longer extrinsically validating because it is unlikely that people would be concerned with the opinions of people that are not there. Therefore, no change in contingencies of self-worth is expected.

Method

Participants

73 participants (36 female and 41 male; M age = 20.25) were recruited from Ohio State University in return for partial course credit. Participants were randomly assigned to one of four

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conditions (social/impression; nonsocial/impression; social/expression; nonsocial/expression).

The distribution of participants in each condition was unequal, significantly favoring the social, impression condition. The participants in this condition made up 37% of the sample. This is noted because conclusions should be drawn more cautiously due to unequal sample sizes.

Design

Participants first completed a pretest in groups of one to four. Each participant was seated at a computer and completed the questionnaires using Qualtrics survey software (www.qualtrics.com). Once they finished, all participants in the same session were given the same manipulation. They received the goal manipulation and were introduced to the social networking site and created their profiles for the site. Beginning the following day, they used the site for 6 days for at least 10 minutes a day. After the 6 days were over, they completed a post-test containing the same questionnaires as the pre-test, plus an additional engagement questionnaire that assessed participants' motivation and effort throughout the study. Participants were not instructed to stop using their current Facebook while participating in the experiment.

Materials

Social-Networking Site. The social networking site was designed for this experiment using www.socialgo.com. Three different social networking sites were created: one for females in the social condition, one for males in the social condition, and one for all participants in the non-social conditions. The social networking sites was kept gender consistent to eliminate possible cross-gender confounds. All three sites were identical except for the gender of confederates. The site for participants in the non-social conditions was specifically designed so that they could not see others' profile pages.

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The social networking site was designed to have all of the same features as Facebook, although it did not stylistically resemble Facebook. Participants could write on walls, update their status and comment on others' status, post and comment on pictures, create groups and events, send messages, and send 'pokes.'

Confederates' Profiles and Feedback. To reduce the variability caused by the different possible interactions people can have with each other through social networking sites, the present study used confederates. Confederate profile pictures were randomly chosen from out-of-state Facebook profile pictures and were all of average attractiveness. Their profile information and social-networking activity represented common activities displayed in the pilot test (Complete feedback; see Appendix B). The feedback and profile information was kept gender-neutral. There were four female confederates and four males confederates. Their activity and feedback was identical and was uploaded throughout the study by the first author.

Manipulations

Goal Manipulation. Each participant was given a goal to keep in mind throughout their use of the social networking site. Participants in the expression goal condition were told their "goal throughout the study is to make sure that they were being themselves." They were told that people "sometimes change when interacting with others by engaging in self-presentation. However, we do not want you to do that. We want you to mainly be concerned with staying true to yourselves". In contrast, participants in the impression goal condition were told that "your goal throughout the study is to try to get others to like you. Try to mainly be concerned with being perceived positively and making a good impression on the other participants". Each person wrote their instructed goal in their own words on their new profile page to serve as a reminder of

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their goal throughout the week. The goal was made private so that only the individual could see what was written.

Social Manipulation. After participants signed up for their account, the social aspects of the social networking site were explained. Participants in the social conditions were told that “Over the next week, there will be four other participants from another part of the study that we want you to try to get to know.” Multiple participants were run at once on the social networking site and were instructed to interact only with the confederate profiles and not with each other. However, participants still sometimes interacted with each other, adding possible confounds. Participants would become friends with other participants. Then, comment on each other’s statuses, photos, and profile information.

Participants in the non-social conditions were told that “There will be other people on the site. However, you cannot see their profile and they cannot see yours. Consequently, we do not want you to try to interact with them.” The social networking site designed for participants in the non-social conditions blocked all other profiles from being viewed. Consequently, it was not possible to see others’ information or communicate via their profile page.

Participants in the social conditions were specifically instructed to get to know the confederates, who were described as Ohio State undergraduates who were participating in another part of the study. They were told that these other participants were not given any specific goal. Participants in the non-social conditions were reminded that other profiles on the site will be blocked and will not be able to be seen.

Pre-test Measures

Contingencies of Self-Worth. Contingencies of Self-Worth were measured using the Contingencies of Self-Worth Scale (Crocker et al., 2003), which includes 5 items for each of the

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7 contingency domains. Responses were scored on a 7-point scale, ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.” This scale was included to measure change in contingencies of self-worth from pre- to post- test.

Facebook Questionnaire. The Facebook questionnaire was created to capture how and why participants use their own Facebook profile as a baseline for social networking involvement (See Appendix A). This questionnaire was administered at pre-test and post-test and served to measure change in Facebook-specific behaviors hypothesized to relate to external contingencies of self-worth. Participants indicated how often they log on to Facebook and how much time they spend on Facebook per day. Participants also indicated the percentage of time they spend on 13 possible Facebook activities. Additionally, participants rated the importance of 12 possible reasons for using Facebook. Finally, participants were asked to rate their concern with how they are perceived on Facebook on a 5-point item.

The item of specific interest was how concerned one is with how they are perceived on Facebook since this item is related to the external contingencies of self-worth. It stands to reason that if someone is becoming more dependent on validation from others for feelings of self-worth, they would also be becoming more concerned with how they are perceived by other people on Facebook.

Post-test Measures

After the week was over, participants completed the post-test, which included all the same measures as the pre-test, plus an engagement questionnaire.

Engagement Questionnaire. The engagement questionnaire was a 5-point, four item scale that served as a manipulation check and evaluation of effort in the social networking site (See Appendix C). The questionnaire asked participants how much they tried to get to know

other participants (social effort) how closely their actions on the social networking site reflect their actual Facebook use (action reflect), how successfully they were at the goal manipulation (goal success) and how involved they were in their new profile (involvement).

Results

General Facebook Use Among Sample

Time Spent on Facebook. An examination of the Facebook questionnaire at pre-test gives an idea of how the sample is currently using Facebook. Ninety-four percent of the entire sample had a Facebook account prior to the study. Of those who have a Facebook account, a majority (65%) log on to Facebook multiple times per day and 49% of participants reported spending more than one hour per day on Facebook (see Figure 1).

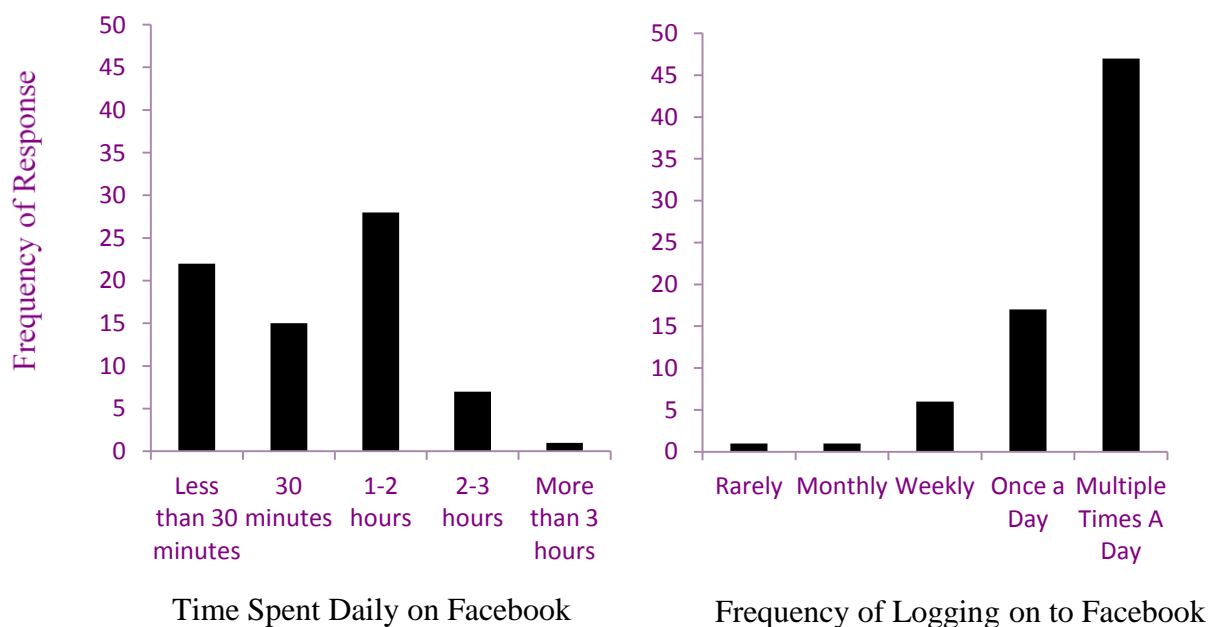


Figure 1. Graphical summary of the distribution of responses to ‘How much time do you spend on Facebook each day?’ and ‘How often do you log on to Facebook?’. Frequencies were calculated using the entire samples’ responses at pre-test.

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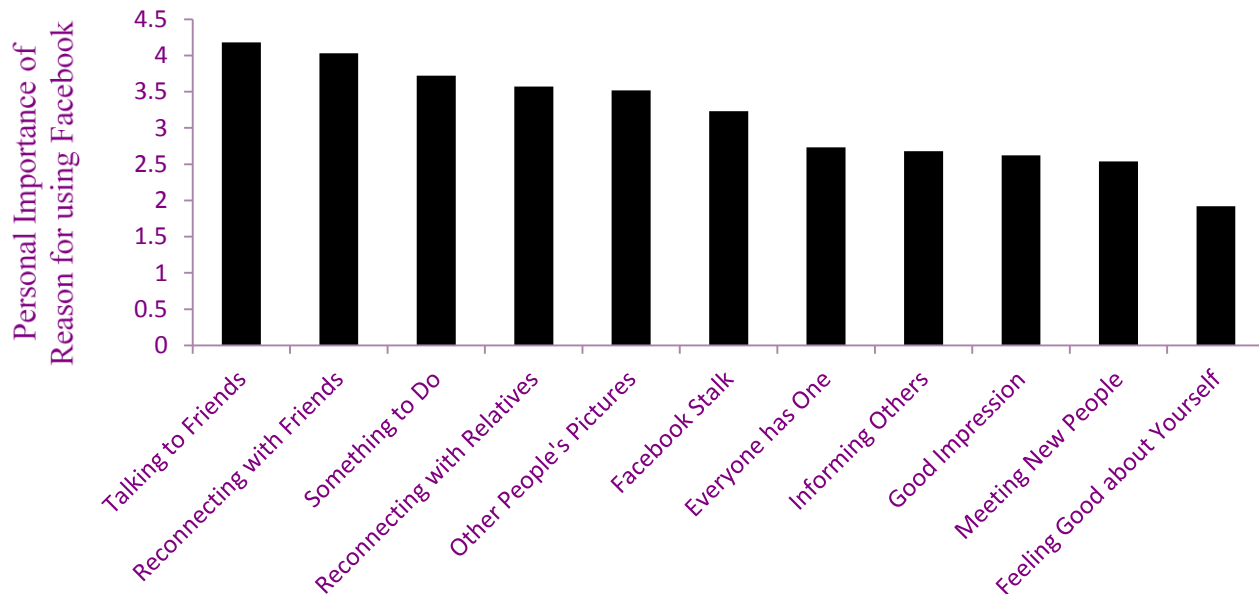


Figure 2. Average ratings of 12 different reasons for using Facebook on a 1 to 5 scale ranging from 'not at all important' to 'very important'. Averages were calculated using the entire samples' responses at pre-test.

Reasons for Facebook Use. Participants reported that talking to friends ($M = 4.18$, $SD = 1.14$), reconnecting with old friends ($M = 4.03$, $SD = 1.07$), passing time (just something to do; $M = 3.72$, $SD = 1.00$), reconnecting with relatives ($M = 3.57$, $SD = 1.3$) and looking at people's pictures ($M = 3.52$, $SD = 1.02$) were the top five most important reasons for using Facebook (see Figure 2).

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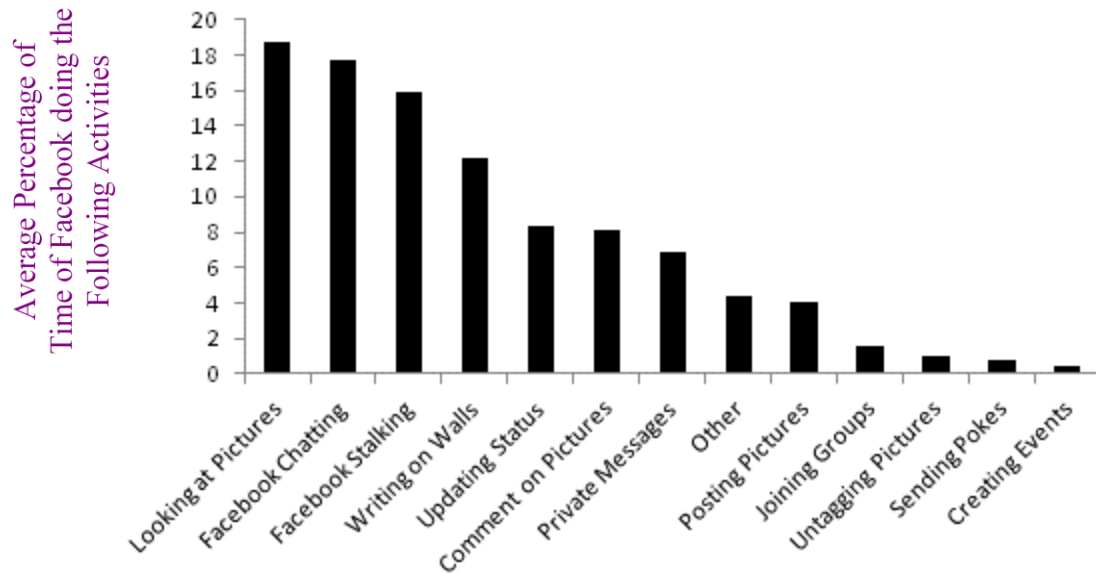


Figure 3. Average percentage of time spent doing 12 different activities on Facebook. Averages were calculated using the entire samples' responses at Time One.

Most Common Facebook Activities. Participants reported that they spend the largest percentage of their time on Facebook looking at other people's pictures ($M = 18.77$; $SD = 17$), Facebook chatting ($M = 17.67$; $SD = 21.6$), looking at others' profile pages (Facebook stalking; $M = 15.16$; $SD = 19.5$), writing on others' walls ($M = 12.16$; $SD = 12$), and updating their status were the ($M = 8.4$; $SD = 10.9$).

The majority of participants in this sample use Facebook daily, often multiple times throughout the day. Participants' important reasons for using Facebook center around maintaining relationships with friends and relatives. However, a lot of the participants' time is spent examining others' profiles. These patterns of Facebook use are similar to those presented in other articles about college students' social networking use (Ellison et al., 2007; Pempek et al., 2009).

Relationship between Facebook Use and External Contingencies of Self-Worth

The correlations between the external contingencies and frequency of Facebook use was tested with data from the pre-test. Time spent on Facebook was positively correlated with a general appearance contingency of self-worth, though was not quite significant ($r = .220, p = .061$). Time spent on Facebook was positively correlated with a general approval of others contingency of self-worth ($r = .231, p = .049$). How often one logs on to Facebook was also positively correlated with a general appearance contingency of self-worth ($r = .264, p = .025$). Overall, these results suggest that there is a positive relationship between Facebook use and external contingencies of self-worth, meaning the more frequently someone uses Facebook, the more likely they are to have their self-esteem staked in their appearance or having the approval of others. No relationship between frequency of Facebook use and a competition contingency of self-worth was found.

Exclusion of Participants

As described in the methods, the intent of the non-social condition was to examine the role of feedback and interaction with others on contingencies of self-worth. However, some participants in the non-social conditions still found ways to interact with the other participants. Although others' profile pages were hidden from view, several participants created public groups in which others could join. They were able to interact within these groups. Since there is no available data on which participants interacted with others and to what extent, interpretation of the non-social condition's effect on participants is difficult. Therefore, participants in the non-social conditions have been excluded from all subsequent analyses. From here on, the study will focus only on the effects of the goal manipulation (expression vs. impression) within the social condition.

Manipulation Checks

Goal Manipulation. As a manipulation check, participants were asked to report a summary of their behavior throughout the use of the social networking site. The participants, on average, only ‘somewhat tried to get to know the other people on the site.’ However this significantly differed by goal condition. Participants given an impression goal reported, on average, trying to get to know others more than participants given an expression goal ($F(1,45)=4.6, p=0.037$), which suggests that goal manipulation was successful. Someone who has the goal of making a positive impression would be more motivated to try to get to know others, compared to someone with the goal of just being yourself. On average, participants reported being somewhat successful at maintaining their instructed goal. The extent to which they tried to get to know others was the only engagement item that differed by condition.

Engagement. Participation and active involvement in the social networking site was crucial if the study was to mimic the effects of Facebook. Engagement was assessed by asking participants about their involvement in the social networking site. On average, participants only became ‘somewhat involved’ in the new social networking site ($M=2.95, SD=.780$) and their actions only ‘somewhat closely’ reflected their actual use of Facebook ($M=2.92, SD=1.06$). In general, participants did not get as involved in the study as the researchers intended (See Table 1). Therefore, items in the engagement questionnaire will be used as moderators of the change in external contingencies of self-worth and concern with how one is perceived on Facebook because the influence of the social networking site will not be strong enough if participants did not put forth effort into the study.

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Descriptive Statistics for Engagement Questionnaire Items

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range	Scale Range	Response Range
Involvement	3.00	0.75	3	1-5	1-4
Actions Reflect	2.87	0.96	4	1-5	1-5
Social Effort	2.85	1.11	4	1-5	1-5
Impression Goal	3.10	0.94	4	1-5	1-5
Expression Goal	2.44	1.50	3	1-5	1-4
Goal Success	2.85	1.00	4	1-5	1-5

Table 1. Summary of Descriptive Statistics for the items included in the engagement questionnaire measures at the post-test that evaluated the participants' overall effort put forth throughout the study. All items were measured on 1 to 5 scales. Social effort was broken down further into specific goal because it was the only engagement item that differed by condition.

Plan for Analysis

The dependent variables include change in external contingencies of self-worth and change in participants' concern with perception on Facebook. Change scores were created by subtracting the pre-test score from the post-test score. Regression analyses were used to evaluate the relationship between the change variables and the goals conditions and engagement questionnaire items.

Change in External Contingencies of Self-Worth.

Regressions of the goal conditions and each engagement item predicting change in each of the three external contingencies of self-worth were done. Neither the goal condition, the engagement items, nor the interaction of the two predicted any changes in external contingencies of self worth (p 's > 0.40).

Change in Concern with Perception on Facebook.

The interaction between goal condition and participant involvement significantly predicted change in concern with perception on Facebook, $\beta = 0.495$, $t(39) = 2.58$ $p =$

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0.014, such that participants' concern with perception on Facebook was unaffected by goal condition if participants did not become involved in the study (see Figure 3). However, participants with an expression goal who were more highly involved with the social networking site reported a decrease in concern with their perception on Facebook. Highly involved participants with a goal to impress others reported an increase in concern with perception on Facebook.

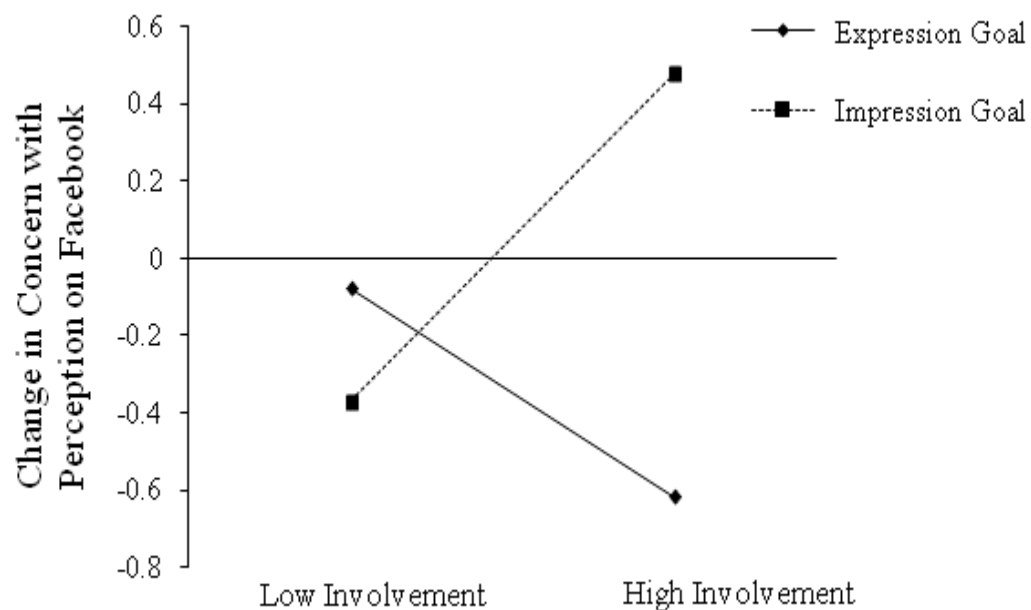


Figure 3. Interaction between goal condition and extent of involvement in new social networking site predicting change in concern with perception on Facebook.

A test of the simple effect of goal condition at one standard deviation and one standard deviation below the mean of involvement found that there was no effect of condition for participants low in involvement, $t(39) = -0.911$, $p = 0.4$. However, goal condition does predict change in participants concern with perception on Facebook for those who were high in involvement, $t(39) = 2.6$, $p < 0.01$. For participants who were highly involved in the new social networking site, the predicted pattern is seen. Participants given an impression goal became more

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concerned with how they are perceived on Facebook ($\beta = 0.50, t(42)=-1.79, p=0.07$), while participants given an expression goal became less concerned ($\beta = -0.49, t(42)=-1.85, p=0.07$), though these trends are not quite significant. As mentioned above, for participants who did not become involved, no significant changes in ‘concern with perception’ or significant difference between conditions were found.

The pattern seen with involvement was replicated with the extent to which participants’ behavior in the new social networking site reflected their actual Facebook use. The two-way interaction between ‘action reflect’ and goal condition significantly predicted change in concern with perception on Facebook, $\beta = 0.332, t(38)=2.11, p=.042$, (see Figure 4). Again, a test of simple effects revealed that when the actions that the participants displayed during the study closely reflected their actual use of Facebook, participants’ goals predicted their concern with perception on Facebook, $t(38)=2.54, p=0.015$. Goal condition does not predict change in concern with perception on Facebook when their actions do not closely reflect actual Facebook use, $t(37)= -0.425, p=0.67$. The analyses of simple slopes for each goal condition were not quite significant. The slope for the impression condition was $0.326, t(42)=1.43, p=0.16$. The slope for the expression condition was $-0.34, t(42)=-1.54, p=0.13$.

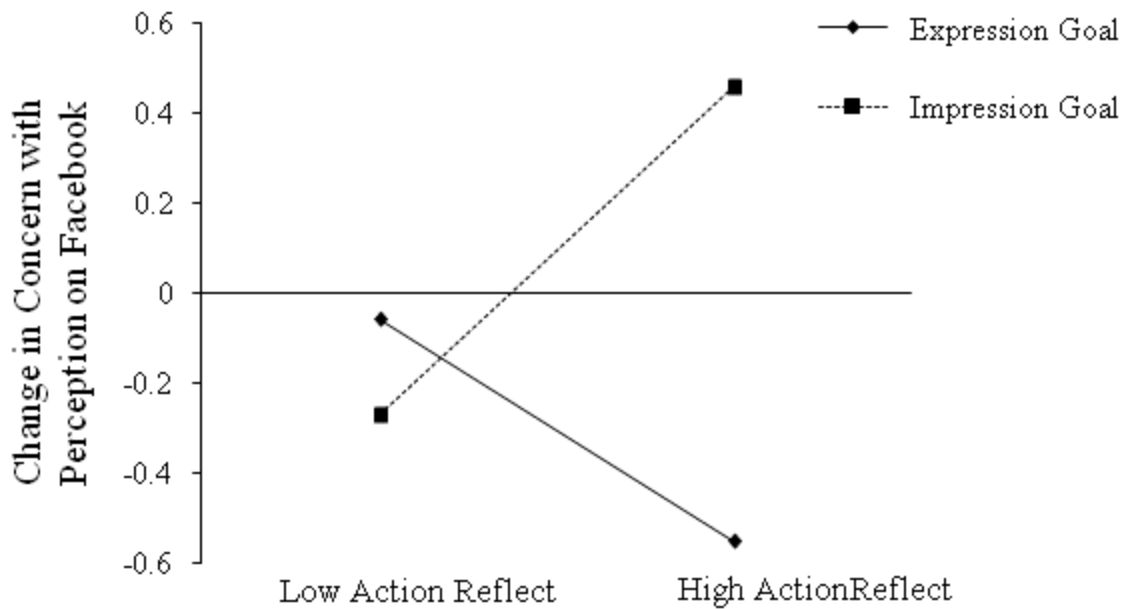


Figure 4. Interaction between goal condition and extent to which actions on new social networking site reflect actual Facebook use predicting change in concern with perception on Facebook.

Finally, the pattern seen with involvement and action reflection was replicated once again with the extent that participants tried to get to know others on the site. The interaction of ‘social effort’ and goal condition significantly predicted change in concern with perception on Facebook, $\beta = 0.369$, $t(38) = 2.62$, $p = 0.012$. A test of simple effects revealed that the effect of goal condition only exists for participants who put effort into getting to know the other social network users. No significant differences in goal condition for ‘change in concern with perception on Facebook’ were found for participants low in social effort, $t(39) = -0.78$, $p = 0.44$. In contrast, participants who were high in social effort significantly differed in ‘change concern with perception on Facebook’ as a function of their goal condition, $t(39) = 2.93$, $p < 0.01$. Participants given an impression goal who tried to get to know others became more concerned with how they are perceived on Facebook ($\beta = 0.35$, $t(42) = 1.65$, $p = 0.11$), while participants given an

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expression goal who also tried hard to get to know others became less concerned ($\beta = -0.34, t(42) = -2.1, p = 0.0$). However, the simple slope analyses for the impression goal condition was not quite significant.

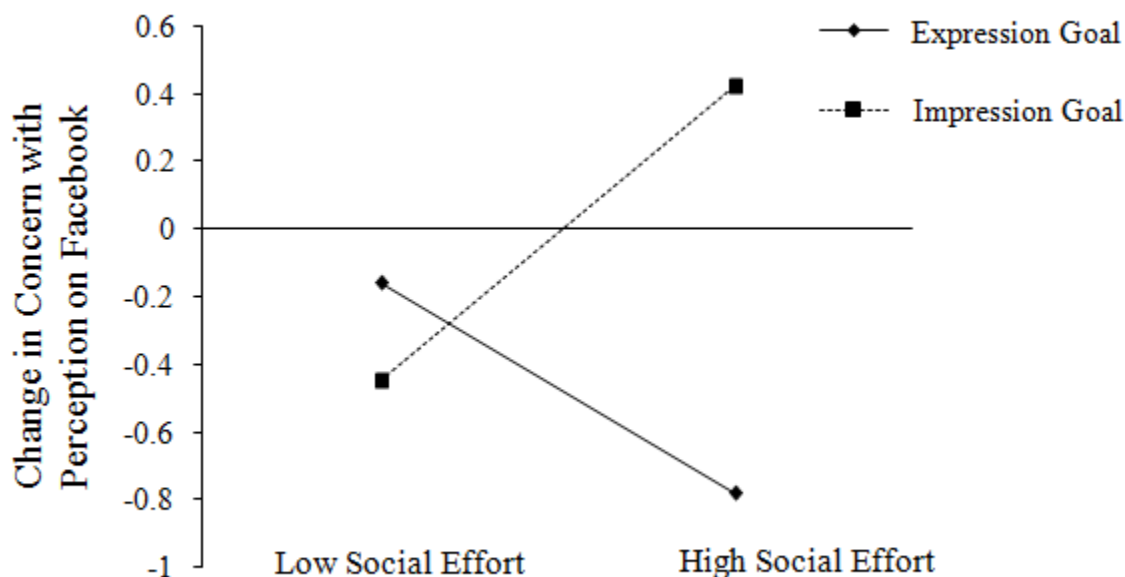


Figure 5. Interaction between goal condition and extent to which participants tried to get to know other people predicting change in concern with perception on Facebook.

The patterns from the other previous engagement items did not extend to the participants' success at maintain their instructed goal. It would be expected that the effect of goal condition would be apparent for participants who were better at maintaining their goal and not for participants who were worse. If the goal condition is driving the difference in changes in 'concern with perception on Facebook', it seems reasonable that the previous pattern would be seen in participants who said they successfully maintained the goal throughout the study. However, no significant interaction between goal condition and goal success was found, $\beta = 0.138, t(39) = .864, p = 0.39$.

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The pattern of interactions between goal condition and three of the engagement items provides some evidence that the environment on social networking sites can influence the extent to which people value others' perceptions of them. These results suggest that the goal that people take on social networking site can influence the change in concern with perception when they are involved in the site.

General Discussion

This study was designed to test the effects of social environment and self-presentational goals for a social network on external contingencies of self-worth and, ultimately, concern about others' perception of the self. It was hypothesized that a goal to make a good impression on others leads people to place more importance on the external areas of their life for feelings of self-worth. Consequently, continual use of social networking sites may lead to an increase in dependence on external contingencies of self-worth. It was further hypothesized that goals for using the social networking site can either buffer or facilitate this effect.

We did not observe changes in external contingencies of self-worth from pre-test to post-test. This could be for a number of reasons. The primary reason was the lack of experimental power. The study was not long enough to see a change in something as stable as contingencies of self-worth. With a longer time period, participants may have become invested in the site and may have formed bonds with the confederates. The additional investment and increased connection with others would have made the manipulations stronger and more effective.

Though we did not see an effect of goal condition on contingencies of self-worth, goal condition did predict a difference in participants' concern with perception on Facebook between goal conditions when participants' involvement and engagement were taken into account.

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Although concern with how one is perceived on Facebook is not directly related to staking one's self-esteem in appearance, approval of others, or how one compares to others, there is a logical connection. If someone is concerned about something, it is reasonable to assume it is something that is important to them. The theory behind contingencies of self-worth is based on the idea that feelings of self-worth are typically impacted by the areas they care most about (Crocker & Wolfe, 2001). The same argument could be made for people's concerns. It is likely that people experience concern only about areas that matter to them. An increase in concern with how one is perceived could be related to an increase in value placed on one's image, which is conceptually similar to the external contingencies of self worth.

However, it should be noted the effect of goal conditions were found only for a specific item that pertained to Facebook. Therefore, it is unclear if the increased concern with others' perception would generalize to participants' images beyond Facebook. However, an increased concern with perception on Facebook can have a number of implications for how people interact, which is often on Facebook. People may start engaging in even more self-presentation. The content may become even more positive, increasing the likelihood of Facebook-induced depression described earlier (Chou & Edge, 2012). Instead of using Facebook for building and maintaining social support systems, people would be using them as another mechanism to promote a positive self-image in what may become a perpetuating cycle.

It is also possible that the effects seen could be a result of a demand effect. The participants in the study did not know the research question of interest or how their condition compared to other conditions. However, they were aware that they knew the goal condition they were in because they were explicitly instructed to have that goal. As a result, they may have

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recognized the relation of the concern with perception item to their specific goal and then, answer in a way they thought they were supposed to.

Limitations

There are several limitations to this study design that may have influenced the results, as well as the conclusions. Primarily, participants in this study used an unfamiliar social networking site for only 10 minutes a day for one week. Such a short time span may not be long enough to capture a change in a stable trait, such as where people stake their self-esteem. It possible that a longer, more realistic intervention would have produced effects of the goal conditions on changes in the external contingencies of self-worth.

A majority of the limitations arose due to the controlled nature of the study. To allow greater experimental control, a social networking site was designed to mimic Facebook and confederates were utilized. Consequently, participants' experiences throughout the study did not directly mimic their extensive real-life experience with Facebook. Participants did not interact with their real friends or have the expectation of ever seeing the confederates again. As a result, the manipulation may not have been as effective as it could have been which may have contributed to the lack of change in external contingencies of self-worth. The unfamiliarity of the site may have lessened the extent to which participants got involved and invested in the site.

Additionally, there was no control group that took the pre-test and the post-test without the social networking use. It is possible that the social networking use did not contribute to the change in the concern with perception. It could have solely been a natural change due to other aspects of the participants' lives. Therefore, interpersonal goals would be playing a role in some other phenomenon not measured by the study, that changes to what extent people think about how they are perceived by others.

Future Directions

To address the issues described above, we have designed a follow-up study has been designed. This study will follow participants for one month as they use their own Facebook accounts. Interpersonal goals will be manipulated. However, this study will explore the role of compassionate and self-image goals. The self-presentation goals utilized in the present study can be thought of as a subset of compassionate and self-image goals. The aim of self-image goals is to gain others' positive regard and promote perception of their ideal selves. The aim of compassionate goal is to create mutually supportive environments (Canevello & Crocker, 2010). Self-presentation, with the desire to make a positive impression, plays an important role in self-image goals. It is the mechanism through which people promote their desirable qualities so that others will think highly of them. In contrast, compassionate goals prioritize authenticity so that relationships can be beneficial to all parties. A third condition will serve as a control and follow participants as they naturally use their own Facebook with no specific goal instruction.

The follow-up study will measure contingencies of self-worth at the beginning and end of the month. This study will also include more measures that examine the change in how the activities and Facebook affect feelings of self-worth. One item for example is "The number of comments I receive on a status update affects my feelings of self-worth." These will be evaluated weekly. We hope this follow-up study will answer lingering questions, as well provide additional insight into the relationship between feelings of self-worth and social networking use.

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Appendix A

Facebook Questionnaire

The next part is asking you to report your average Facebook use. Please answer honestly.

1. Do you currently have a Facebook?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

2. How often do you log on the Facebook?
 - a. Multiple times a day
 - b. Once a day
 - c. Weekly
 - d. Monthly
 - e. Rarely
 - f. Do not have a Facebook

3. How much time on average do you spend on Facebook each day?
 - a. More than 3 hours
 - b. 2-3 hours
 - c. 1-2 hours
 - d. 30 minutes
 - e. Less than 30 minutes
 - f. Do not have a Facebook

4. Indicate the percent of your time on Facebook devoted to each of the following activities (e.g. if I spend half of my time looking at pictures I would put a 50 next to that activity)

____ updating your status
____ writing on other's walls
____ sending other's private messages
____ looking at other people's pictures
____ poking people
____ posting pictures

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- _____ checking up on people (e.g. “stalking people”)
- _____ Facebook chatting
- _____ commenting on other’s pictures
- _____ untagging yourself
- _____ inviting people to events
- _____ joining groups
- _____ other

5. The next section with list 12 reasons for using Facebook. Indicate the importance of each reason for your use of Facebook on a 5-point scale from 1 not (not at all important) to 5(very important).

For example, if talking to friends is a big reason that you use Facebook, you would mark very important for ‘Using Facebook to Talk to Friends’

Using Facebook to Talk to Friends

1	2	3	4	5
Not Important	Of Little Importance	Moderately Important	Important	Very Important

Using Facebook to Reconnect with Old Friends

1	2	3	4	5
Not Important	Of Little Importance	Moderately Important	Important	Very Important

Using Facebook to Meet New People

1	2	3	4	5
Not Important	Of Little Importance	Moderately Important	Important	Very Important

Using Facebook to Reconnect with Relatives

1	2	3	4	5
Not Important	Of Little Importance	Moderately Important	Important	Very Important

Using Facebook to Feel Good About Yourself

1	2	3	4	5
Not Important	Of Little	Moderately	Important	Very Important

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Importance Important

Using Facebook to Look at Pictures

1	2	3	4	5
Not Important	Of Little Importance	Moderately Important	Important	Very Important

Using Facebook to Look at Other People's Profiles (e.g. 'Facebook stalking')

1	2	3	4	5
Not Important	Of Little Importance	Moderately Important	Important	Very Important

Using Facebook to Make a Good Impression on Others

1	2	3	4	5
Not Important	Of Little Importance	Moderately Important	Important	Very Important

Using Facebook Just As Something To Do

1	2	3	4	5
Not Important	Of Little Importance	Moderately Important	Important	Very Important

Using Facebook Because Everyone Has One

1	2	3	4	5
Not Important	Of Little Importance	Moderately Important	Important	Very Important

Using Facebook to Keep People Informed About What You Are Doing

1	2	3	4	5
Not Important	Of Little Importance	Moderately Important	Important	Very Important

6. How concerned are you with how you are perceived on Facebook by others?

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- a. Very Concerned
- b. Pretty Concerned
- c. Sometimes Concerned
- d. Rarely
- e. Never Concerned

Appendix B

Confederate Feedback

When Friend requesting participants:

Confederate 1: Hey! Welcome. I am looking forward to getting to know you

Confederate 2: Hey. What's up?

Confederate 3: Hey. How are you doing?

Confederate 4: Send Wave

Day 1

Confederate 1:

Status update: you can't beat reading a good book

To Confederate 2: What kind of dogs do you have?

On Participant's Wall: Nice to meet you. How has your quarter been going?

In Share Section: Hey Everyone!

Confederate 2:

Status Update: I am dreaming of coffee

To confederate 3: rock climbing...Pretty Cool. What other outdoor sports are you into?

On Participant's Wall: What are you guys majoring in?

Confederate 3:

Status Update: going to be a good day

In reply to Confederate 2: I really enjoy biking. Do you play sports?

On Participant's Wall: What's up everyone?

In Share section: This page is kind of weird, right?

Confederate 4:

Status update: so much reading to do

In reply to Confederate 3: yea, definitely not like any of the other REP experiments

To Confederate 3: Do you ever go rock climbing at the ARC?

To Participant: What classes are you taking?

Day 2

Confederate 1:

Status update: So tired. School starts too early

To participant: I'm in love with pretty much all the T.V. shows you listed

To Confederate 3's comment on Participant's wall- Not much. Trying to balance school and everything else. Not easy.

To Confederate 3's share- I Know. I can procrastinate even more now.

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Confederate 2:

Status update: I think I am going to call in sick

In reply to Confederate 1: They are 2 golden retrievers. Do you have any pets?

In reply to participant: psych major. Do you like yours so far?

Confederate 3:

Status update: If I have to stare at this homework problem any longer, I'm going to scream.

In reply to Confederate 4: Sometime but I like this place in Worthington called Vertical Adventures

In reply to Confederate 1: hahaha yea. I know what you mean

Confederate 4:

Status update: don't you hate when you have a song stuck in your head

In reply to Participant: what do you guys want to do after college?

In reply to Confederate 3's question on 2's page: I enjoy biking too but I mostly play soccer.

Day 3

Confederate 1:

Status Update: bleh. Insert interesting status update

On Wall: It is one of those days.

In reply to Confederate 1: No I wish. My landlord doesn't allow pets.

In reply to participant: I know what you mean. College is taking some getting used to.

Motivating yourself can be kinda hard.

Confederate 2:

Status update: I guess my body decided that i needed sleep more than i needed to finish my homework. I somehow managed to sleep through 6 alarms... That takes some skill

In reply to Confederate 4's question: I have no idea. That seems so far away. What about you?

To participant: supportive comment on their status

Confederate 3:

Status update: just got the iPhone. Beeeyaw

To participant: Is this your first year at OSU too?

In reply to confederate 4's question: I want to go into a business field of some sort.

Confederate 4:

Status update: College is awesome!

In reply to Confederate 3's question: It is mine. Does anyone else think the freshmen survey class is a joke? What FYE things are you doing?

In reply to Confederate 2's status: Do you love it? I was thinking about getting one?

To participant: ask them a question about something they have posted

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Day 4

Confederate 1:

Status Update: at the end of summer, I always want school to start but then after it starts I want summer back. Can I ever be pleased? Probably not

To participant: Are you in any clubs?

In reply to Confederate 4: I hate that class and mine is super early in the morning. Such a drag.

Confederate 2:

Status update: Megan & I just played PGA for 4 straight hours....

In reply to confederate 4: I was thinking about going to the one of the ones about partying.

To participant: I am a huge fan of (interest something from their profile information) to.

In reply to Confederate 1's status: Don't worry. I can never be pleased either :)

Create Group called 'Psych 100'

Confederate 3:

Status update: Just celebrated a 21st birthday! Wish it had been mine

In reply to Confederate 2: PGA for four hours. Living the life, are we?

To participant: (If song) Cool song. What band is this?

(If video). This video is awesome

Confederate 4:

Status update: gooeyz time

Create Bulletin: Attention Everyone! It was nice getting to know everyone. I hope everyone has a great year!

To Confederate 3: I know. 21 seems so far away.

Day 5

Confederate 1:

Status Update: How can professors not get bored of their own long, monotone lectures?

On Wall: I need to find a job...

On wall: Reply to Confederate 4's Bulletin: It was nice to meet you too.

Confederate 2:

Status update: Looking forward to putting on my Packers jersey for Football Sunday.

In reply to 3: Yes indeed I am.

On wall: Today is going extremely slow.

To participant: Comment on status update.

Confederate 3:

Status update: these 8am classes have got to stop...

On Wall: I wish I was more interesting. Then I would totally blog about my life.

To participant: Ask question based on status.

Confederate 4:

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Status update: who thought college would be this much work?

On wall: Can anyone recommend a song to listen to?

Day 6

Confederate 1:

Status Update: On Wall: studying or procrastinating? What do you guys think?

Confederate 2:

Status update: my best friend from high school is coming to visit. Time to show them the best OSU has to offer

Confederate 3:

Status update: what is up everyone?

Confederate 4:

Status update: last day on this social networking site...

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Appendix C

Engagement Questionnaire

How involved did you get into your new profile page?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All Involved	A Little Involved	Somewhat Involved	Pretty Involved	Very Involved

How closely did your actions on your new profile page reflect your actions on your Facebook page?

1	2	3	4	5
Not Close At All	A Little Close	Somewhat Close	Pretty Close	Very Close

How much did you try to get to know the other participants through your profile?

1	2	3	4	5
Did not Try	Tried A Little	Somewhat Tried	Tried Moderately	Tried A Lot

How successful were you at sticking to the goal given to you at the beginning of the study?

1	2	3	4	5
Not Successful	A Little Successful	Somewhat Important	Pretty Successful	Very Successful

This study is attempting to replicate students' actual Facebook experience in the lab. We want participants to get involved in their new profile page and actually try to get to know the other participants through their page. We would welcome any suggestions you have in achieving this goal in the space below.

